

**QNRF awards \$121 million in research funding to national priority projects**

**Doha, 14 May 2013:** Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) has announced new research grants worth a total of \$121 million today, under its flagship funding program, the National Priorities Research Program (NPRP).

The announcement came in the eagerly-anticipated finale of QNRF's fifth Annual Forum, held this morning at Qatar National Convention Centre, where more than 350 members of Qatar's research community gathered to learn the results of proposals submitted for the sixth cycle of the NPRP. The fifth QNRF Annual Forum was held under the patronage of Mr Faisal Alsuwaidi, President of Research and Development at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

"The National Priorities Research Program was created to support original research for Qatar on topics of national importance, and to bolster the nation's growing research culture. This cycle placed particular emphasis on alignment with the Qatar National Research Strategy and on local research collaboration, with bonus points awarded to proposals involving stakeholders from Qatar's academic, government, non-profit, and industrial sectors," said Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director at QNRF.

Twenty-seven local research institutions have received funding for a total of 137 proposals, out of the 710 proposals submitted to NPRP's sixth cycle in January 2013. These proposals were selected on a competitive basis and underwent a rigorous evaluation process. Each proposal was sent to five independent international peer reviewers, who shared their evaluation with QNRF for a final funding decision.

"With a 20 percent success rate, NPRP's sixth cycle demonstrates the rising quality of research in Qatar. Grants were awarded based on QNRF's strict criteria that take into account originality and quality of the research proposed, alignment with the Qatar National Research Strategy, potential benefits to Qatar and the region, and collaboration with other institutions in Qatar, in addition to the peer reviewers' recommendations," said Noor Al-Merekhi, Program Manager of NPRP.

Thirty-three of the awarded proposals involve collaboration with local stakeholders, and 97 percent of them are directly aligned with the four pillars of the Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS), namely: energy and environment, computer science and ICT, health and social sciences, arts and humanities.

"The success rate within each QNRS pillar was also approximately 20 percent, reflective of QNRF's commitment to excellence in research and development across these fields, which have been identified as priorities within Qatar's research efforts," added Al-Merekhi, who announced the results on behalf of QNRF.

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Al-Merekhi went on to explain how the research grants would be managed throughout their lifecycle of up to three years. Each grant is worth between \$120,000 and \$1.05 million, with a requirement that at least 65 percent of the annual budget is expended inside Qatar. Likewise, 50 percent of the total research efforts must be conducted in Qatar.

“NPRP encourages collaboration not only among stakeholders in Qatar, but also between Qatar and the international research community. The opportunities that NPRP provides to researchers outside of Qatar are unique, and have attracted attention from some of the world’s top scientific minds,” said Dr Al-Taie, who noted that 147 international research institutions from 26 countries will be collaborating in projects awarded under the Program’s sixth cycle.

The announcement of NPRP grants marked the culmination of the fifth Annual Forum’s proceedings, which also included a series of presentations by QNRF’s senior management around the theme ‘**Research forward**’, in a reflection of the funding agency’s new phase of development. Senior representatives shared QNRF’s five-year plan, featuring new programs already underway and the Fund’s renewed focus on research outcomes and dissemination.

QNRF also recognised funded researchers and Research Offices, with the Best Research Team Award going to Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and Best Research Office Award going to Texas A&M University at Qatar. The Best Researcher Award, introduced this year, went to Dr Khalid Ali Qarage of Texas A&M University at Qatar.

In a special show of appreciation, Dr Nabeel Al-Salem and Fatema Sorore were both honoured for their service to QNRF, which has extended for beyond five years.

For the full list of institutions that were awarded and information on their proposed research, please visit [http://www.qnrf.org/awarded\\_proposals/](http://www.qnrf.org/awarded_proposals/), which also provides detailed information on all research proposals awarded under QNRF’s various funding programs.

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**About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)**

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a centre within the Research & Development establishment at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNRF administers funding for original, competitively selected research and furthers collaborations within academia, the public, private, governmental and non-governmental sectors through effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. While QNRF actively seeks internationally recognised researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, visit: [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org)

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